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Description

AMENDED CLAIMS

 [received by the International Bureau on 22 September 2004 (22.09. 04);
 original claims 2-4,5-17 amended; original claims 5-11,25-28 have been added (5 pages)] 1. An article guide device for use in a storage area wherein said article guide device includes guide means (20) positionable with respect to the storage area so as to define a path or track (32) on which articles held in the storage area are located and along which said articles can be moved in a guided manner within the storage area to selectively move said articles to be positioned at an opening into the storage area for viewing and/or removal, characterised in that said path or track (32) is continuous and formed from a series of elongate members selectively positioned on the storage area surface to allow the user to make use of the storage space shape.

2. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) are in the form of a series of interconnected elongate members.

3. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) are positioned so as to define a substantially oval track (32).

4. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) can be selectively positioned on a support surface so as to define a suitable track width and track shape.

5. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) define a continuous path for said articles to be moved along.

6. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said article guide device includes at least two portions, and said portions can overlap to allow adjustment of the length of the guide means.

7. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised by including any or any combination of protrusions and openings.

8. An article guide device according to claim 7 and characterised in that said protrusions are located in a recess.

9. An article guide device according to claim 8 and characterised in that the free ends of said protrusions form part of the surface of the track of the article guide device.

10. An article guide device according to claim 9 and characterised in that said track surface is substantially planar.

11. An article guide device according to claim 1 characterised in that cross ribs are provided to maintain the shape of the device.

12. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said path is at least partly defined by at least part of at least one surface of the storage area.

13. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) includes support means (110) to allow at least a second guide track (104) to be defined and spaced apart from the first guide track (108) so as to form a plurality of article movement tracks as part of the device.

14. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said device includes at least one movement means to exert a moving force on said articles along said guide means.

15. An article guide device according to claim 14 and characterised in that said at least one movement means includes any or any combination of wheels, bearings, cogs, rollers, and/or the like.

16. An article guide device according to claim 14 and characterised in that said at least one movement means are spaced apart and mounted laterally along said guide means (20) so as to contact said articles (16) at spaced intervals.

17. An article guide device according to claim 14 and characterised in that said at least one movement means inter-engage with each other.

18. An article guide device according to claim 14 and characterised in that said at least one movement means are connected to drive means, said drive means providing a force to drive said at least one movement means.

19. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said guide means (20) are in the form of one or more grooves or slots (202) along which a series of bases (208) are spaced, said bases (208) provided to receive at least one article (16) placed thereon.

20. An article guide device according to claim 19 and characterised in that said bases (208) are located in and movable along said one or more grooves or slots (202).

21. An article guide device according to claim 20 and characterised in that said bases (208) are connected to drive means, said drive means providing a force to drive said bases (208) along said one or more grooves or slots (202).

22. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that a series of trays (402) are mounted at spaced intervals on said guide means (20).

23. An article guide device according to claim 22 and characterised in that said trays (402) are moved between first and second vertically spaced planes (406,412) to join and interlink first and second guide tracks.

24. An article guide device according to claim 23 and characterised in that said trays (402) are connected to drive means, said drive means providing a force to drive said trays (402) along said guide means (20).

25. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said device is constructed from a plurality of sections which are connected together to define a continuous path or loop.

26. An article guide device according to claim 1 and characterised in that said device is constructed from a plurality of sections which are adjustably connected together such that the device can be adjusted in size to fit a storage area.

27. An article guide device according to any of the preceding claims wherein the storage area is a cupboard space.

28. An article guide device according to any of the preceding claims characterised in that the articles are any or any combination of cans, bottles or containers for consumable goods.

Statement under Article 19 (1) Further to the written opinion of 26 in July in connection with the above matter, please find an amended set of claims enclosed which we believe overcomes the Examiner's objections.

Briefly, documents D1-D3 are implemented with unidirectional tracks, for use as First-In-First-Out (FIFO) systems, such that the first item placed on the track at one end is the first item from the track at the other end. This is useful for stock rotation, to ensure that the oldest stock is used first, but not for retrieving specific items. When retrieving a specific item, as the track is not continuous, items have to be removed from one end of the track and placed elsewhere or back on the other end of the track until the item is found. In the present invention, the track is continuous, so a specific item can be retrieved by simply moving the items around the track until the desired item is reached, without having to remove other items from the track. Claim 1 has thus been modified to include the feature of the track being continuous.

In addition, the track of the present invention is formed from a series of elongate members, selectively positioned on the storage area surface to allow the user to make use of the storage space shape. In contrast to the prior art, the track size can thus be adjusted in shape or size to optimise the space utilised by the same in a cupboard, and claim 1 has been amended accordingly.

Basis for these amendments can be found on page 3, lines 6-16, together with the Figures, particularly Figure 1b.

Claims 5-11 and 25-28 have also been added, basis for which can be found on page 3, lines 6-16, and Figures 5a-f.

Claims 2-4, 5-17 have been amended to bring the same into line accordingly, now bearing the numbers 2-4, 12-24 respectively.

We believe the amended claims are acceptable to expedite prosecution of the application, and we look forward to receiving favourable comments in due course.
